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**The Natalie M. LaPrade Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission Contracts  
With Regional Economic Studies Institute at Towson University for Licensing Reviews**

*Inter-Agency Agreement to Provide Expert Evaluation of Applicants for New State Industry*

**BALTIMORE, MD (July 21, 2015)** – The Natalie M. LaPrade Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission today announced it has formalized an inter-agency agreement with Towson University’s Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI) to help develop application language and assist in managing the professional evaluation of applicants seeking licensure as medical cannabis growers, processors or dispensers within the state.

The Commission anticipates applications and instructions for prospective growers, processors and dispensers will be available on the Commission’s website in September.

“Working with RESI will enable the Commission to expedite the application development and evaluation processes by tapping into a network of industry experts nationwide,” said Hannah Byron, executive director of the Natalie M. LaPrade Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission. “As we seek to launch a new industry in the state, RESI and a team of experienced evaluators will join with the Commission to identify the best-qualified program applicants, ensuring the safe and effective delivery of medical cannabis to patients in Maryland.”

Comprised of a diverse group of highly skilled professionals, including analysts and researchers, RESI is a unit of Towson University’s Division of Innovation & Applied Research. RESI has extensive experience working with state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector firms to provide superior economic, policy, and program analysis. RESI has evaluated programs relating to topics ranging from economic development and diversification to environmental initiatives. Over the years, the institute has established itself as a leading expert on Maryland’s economy.

“We value the opportunity to assist in the provider evaluations to support this important initiative’s purpose and intent,” said Dyan Brasington, the vice president of the Division of Innovation & Applied Research.

Under the terms of the agreement, the partnership with RESI runs through December 31, 2015. Once applications are posted, licensees could be given approval as early as December of this year.

**About the Natalie M. LaPrade Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission**

The Natalie M. LaPrade Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission develops policies, procedures and regulations to implement programs that ensure medical cannabis is available to qualifying patients in a safe and effective manner. The Commission oversees all licensing, registration, inspection and testing measures pertaining to Maryland's medical cannabis program and provides relevant program information to patients, physicians, growers, dispensers, processors, testing laboratories and caregivers.